

when the Conservatives fell from power, the number had increased to sixty-three.

The Liberals never ceased condemning the merchant marine which will go down in history under the name of the "Ballantyne Marine." Not without cause have they reproached this ex-Minister of Marine for having given out without public tenders fifty-six contracts for the construction of merchant ships at a total cost of \$43,704,962.

This merchant marine finally cost us \$70,000,000! Therefore, this brief review of the facts, although incomplete, brings to light this undeniable truth: our deplorable financial situation, previous, during and after the war, is due to the Tory government; an unskilful and extravagant administration from 1912 and 1913; war contracts which have squandered many millions of the public funds; exaggerated and useless recruiting which—the fact being even admitted by Sir Arthur Currie—brought on a loss of \$150,000,000 to the country; purchase of bankrupt railways which have overburdened our budget and show, each year, deficits amounting to 60 and 70 million dollars; the establishment of a merchant marine which has cost us 70 million dollars and entails a yearly loss of many million dollars.

Indeed, the heritage that the Tory government left to the Liberal government was pitiful. Nevertheless, the present government administers the public affairs in the best possible way; the management of the state railways, until we can find a purchaser or carry out a merger which will not throw the country into confusion, has been placed in the hands of a most competent man; the annual increase of our debt which, even two years after the war, amounted to almost \$100,000,000 under the preceding government, has been substantially decreased; taxation has been diminished and the expenditures checked. The present government administers the affairs of the country at a cost less than in 1914, so far as controllable expenditures are concerned. The Liberal government's task is heavy and difficult and is certainly not at an end. The leader of the opposition and his followers who have left us in the lurch, not only reproach us for being there, but have no suggestions worth while to make toward improving the country's finances.

The Tories have but one remedy for all the ills they have caused and from which we suffer: it is protection! By mounting this old lanky horse, the leader of the Tory party remains what he was in 1921. He has not changed. There is, therefore, no earthly reason why the public should change their opinion of him. The Conservative party

[Mr. Prevost.]

wants a high tariff rather than a broad one; the Liberal party favours a broad tariff rather than a high one, a protective tariff which benefits everybody.

Mr. LAPOINTE (Translation): Hear, hear!

Mr. PREVOST (Translation): They favour the masses instead of classes. It was Laurier's policy. The Tories are using the same weapons against the Liberal government of to-day, as they used in their attacks against the Laurier government. Our opponents are endeavouring to create a panic among the capitalists and the working classes by saying that the Liberals will ruin the Canadian industries. The same old tune. It is not of yesterday... Laurier responded to it by giving Canada an unheard of period of prosperity. The present government responds to it, in its turn, by helping the consumers without prejudicing the manufacturers.

It is amusing to read over the calamities which were prophesied last year by a number of Conservatives, because the government had dared to lower the duties on certain instruments of production.

The words of the member for Fort William and Rainy River (Mr. Manion) still linger in my memory, his magnificent voice with its great range, trills and variations have made him the first tenor of the group who chime in with the leader of the opposition, I still hear the hon. member exclaim in this House, on April 28, 1924:

Someone has described this budget as national suicide. I should like to describe it as national homicide.

The hon. member denounced the government for wanting to crush the eastern industries; he stated that the 1924 budget would no doubt ruin a number of legitimate industries.

The member for Fort William and Rainy River, might tell us, this year, with the same certainty, what are the legitimate industries that have been ruined by the 1924 budget?

Other speakers contended that the manufacture of farm implements, in particular, would be ruined; now, the facts as well as statements emanating from the manufacturers themselves prove the contrary. Indeed, Sir, if we compared the stature of the men of the Tory group to their criticisms, there are no giants among them.

Although the financial outlook of our policy bears a great importance, it is not the only one to hold our attention. The national spirit by which our policy must be inspired and guided is still more intimately linked with our life and future than the wealth or poverty